

# Employee FRONTLINE

A newsletter from the WA State Employee Assistance Program

## Sleep Better by Breaking Bad Habits



Waiting until you feel sleepy working at the computer late at night before going to bed is not a dreamy idea. Ditto, taking a laptop to bed and falling asleep. These behaviors (and others like them) ruin sleep quality. Repeated research has warned that lack of sleep increases your risk of health problems such as cancer, heart disease, type 2

diabetes, and even obesity. Recommendations from the National Sleep Foundation you may want to practice include the following: 1) participating in a ritual of preparing for sleep each night before climbing into bed, and 2) going to bed at the same time each night, even on weekends or days off. Also, have a routine in the morning when you wake up. Start tonight, and see if these suggestions don't improve your sleep quality. See a doctor if sleep issues persist.

## Go Ahead, Admit You're Wrong

If you have a reputation for reluctance to admit you're wrong, a few insights can motivate you to improve your ability to practice this acquired skill. You'll also enhance your workplace relationships. The key for what some feel is a seemingly impossible task is recognizing the benefits you derive from it. Admitting you're wrong when necessary demonstrates guts and willingness to be vulnerable. Practicing the skill also demonstrates high self-esteem and lack of a need to cling to something to protect yourself from an imaginary fear. Those in supervisory or management roles instantly recognize your capacity for being a team player. No one likes to admit they are wrong, but those who can do so with class are recognized as valuable workers and desirable work partners. They also can be counted on to be better communicators. Admitting you're wrong facilitates the willingness of others with whom you associate to also be more open and forgiving, all of which contributes to the creation of better problem-solving scenarios and the accomplishment of the mission in your workplace.



## Success Breeds Success

You've heard the phrase "success breeds success." Is it true? Yes, say academic researchers who showed that a small positive reward or support for those starting businesses reinforced measurably their success—by 30%—over those who got no reward. Small and quick rewards made the difference, not the size. The dynamic may carry over to any goal-oriented endeavor. Make small and quick rewards a part of any achievement strategy like learning new tasks, skills, habits, or instruments, and you'll maximize the power of this phenomenon.

## Help Prevent Diabetes in Two Minutes

Researchers at Abertay University (United Kingdom) say just two minutes of high-intensity exercise per week by middle-aged adults will lower blood glucose levels by 6% and increase skeletal muscle functioning after several weeks. Research showed that a series of ten six-second sprints with one minute of rest between each one, done twice per week, did the trick. A similar routine could help you ward off type 2 diabetes. Exercise only after getting a doctor's approval. Exercise also helps older people remain independent and mobile. Now, that's motivation!



# Frontline Employee

## Don't Fall for Facebook Syndrome



If one look at your Facebook page tells you everyone else's life seems more exciting and happier than yours, you are experiencing Facebook Syndrome. Social media has a direct bearing on how we feel about ourselves, according to a new study of 79 undergraduate students who discovered being denied the use of Facebook or receiving fewer "likes" and "comments" had a direct bearing on the participants' self-esteem and feeling of "meaningful existence." Do you feel stressed, anxious, or have negative thoughts about yourself after using social media? Take steps to detach from Facebook's assault. Even creator Mark Zuckerberg didn't mean for his invention to be a way of life—it is only supposed to be a utility. Do not use social media as a time filler, a way to validate your life's worth, or to prove how much happier others are than you. Realize most people do not post negative information, and as a result you're exposed to a selective set of information, which warps your perception. Step back from the screen and invest in real relationships—the 3-D kind that you can see and feel.

## Stay in Emotional Control at Work



Control your emotions—don't let them control you. It sounds simple, but it's not. Still, it is one of the most important skills you can learn for managing workplace stress. Three feeling states dominate negativity at work: anger, disappointment, and frustration. When you experience any of these, be capable of practicing the art of detachment. Don't lose patience, mope at your desk, give people the silent treatment, or withhold information—these are unhealthy coping tactics. Detachment may include taking a short hallway walk;

counting to ten; changing your body posture to one that is erect and sure, with your chin up; doing slow, deep-breathing exercises; or taking a quick jog, if your work situation permits. Reinforce this overall new coping strategy by checking your progress after 30 days. Ask a friend if they've noticed your improved mood.

## Parents' Power to Prevent Drug Abuse

Parents who disapprove of drug abuse and put their foot down are more likely to have teens who don't abuse drugs. Suffolk University (Boston, MA) researchers examined a national survey of more than 18,000 adolescents, and found that teens whose parents expressed strong disapproval of all types of substances (prescription drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana) were least likely to misuse prescription medicine—a growing teen problem. Combine disapproval with steering your teenager toward healthy behavioral choices. Talk about resisting peer pressure and discuss consequences. Encourage questions and dialogue. Research argues this approach will work better than "hoping for the best" or thinking you have no influence.

## Protecting the Elderly from Abuse

The National Center on Elder Abuse reports that 14% of elderly Americans face some form of elder mistreatment, neglect, or financial abuse. Elder abuse cuts across socioeconomic lines, and it isn't all planned and purposeful. Adult children caregivers who have other life pressures, responsibilities, personal problems, financial stress, and job issues can be unwittingly at risk of committing elder abuse. This may take the form of ignored phone calls, mismanaged medications, lost tempers, and/or undermining an elderly person's financial decisions, or even manifest itself in a delay in providing for the elderly person's critical personal care needs. If you are an adult caregiver, do not let guilt or feeling that "this is all my responsibility now" prevent you from getting relief and experiencing the renewal you need in order to cope with your situation. Check out [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov) where you will find support, resources, and a ton of ideas to maintain your life balance and have a healthier relationship with an elderly loved one.